

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY ATHENS NIACT IMMEDIATE

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AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

USMISSION NATO IMMEDIATE

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

CINCEUR IMMEDIATE

CINCUSAFE IMMEDIATE

USDOCOSOUTH IMMEDIATE

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

JCS WASHDC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 176946

EXDIS MILITARY ADDEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

E.O11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PLOS, TU, GR

SUBJECT: GREEK CONCERN OVER THE SISMIK

1. THE GREEK CHARGE TELEPHONED LAINGEN JULY 16 CONCERNING
A MESSAGE HE HAD RECEIVED FROM BITSIOS FOLLOWING UP ON THE
COUNDOURIOTES REPRESENTATIONS OF JULY 13 (STATE 174749).

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2. BITSIOS HAD ASKED THAT WE BE INFORMED OF TWO THINGS. FIRST; OF THE ESENBEL STATEMENT TO THE TURKISH PRESS THAT THE SISMİK WOULD GO TO SEA BY THE END OF THE MONTH. THIS IN ITSELF WAS PROVOCATIVE, SAID THE CHARGE, GIVEN THE FACT OF ONGOING NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY.

3. SECONDLY, COUNDOURIOTES WAS TO POINT OUT TO US THE DIFFERENCE, IN THIS INSTANCE, BETWEEN WHAT THE TURKS CLAIMED WERE TERRITORIAL SEAS AND WHAT WERE INTERNATIONAL WATERS. THE GREEK POSITION WAS THAT THE TURKS CANNOT CLAIM TO BE IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS WHEN A SHIP LIKE THE SISMİK WAS CLEARLY UNDERTAKING RESEARCH AFFECTING THE CONTINENTAL SHELF IN WATERS THAT EXTEND BEYOND THAT "NARROW SLICE" OF THE TURKISH CONTINENTAL SHELF THAT EXTENDED BEYOND TURKISH TERRITORIAL WATERS IN UNCONTESTED AREAS. IN OTHER WORDS, GREECE DID NOT NECESSARILY CHALLENGE THAT THESE WATERS WERE INTERNATIONAL WATERS FOR NAVIGATION

PURPOSES. BUT THEY WERE CLEARLY NOT YET SO DEFINED IN TERMS OF THE DETERMINATION OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF.

4. THE CHARGE ALSO REPEATED WHAT HE HAD SAID ON THE 13TH ON INSTRUCTION; I.E. THAT THE TURKISH ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE SHIP WOULD SAIL INTO THE AEGEAN IN ITSELF IMPLIED IT WOULD GO INTO AREAS BEYOND THE CLEARLY RECOGNIZED TURKISH TERRITORIAL SEAS AND CONTINENTAL SHELF.

5. LAINGEN REITERATED USG HOPE THAT BOTH SIDES WOULD EXERCISE MAXIMUM RESTRAINT. HE TOLD THE CHARGE THAT WE BELIEVED GREECE APPEARED TO BE OVER-REACTING, AND THAT KUBISCH HAD SO SPOKEN TO BITSIOS. THIS WAS PARTICULARLY SO IN LIGHT OF THE ASSURANCES WE HAD HAD FROM THE TURKS, AND WHICH WE HAD CONVEYED TO ATHENS, AND IN LIGHT OF THE FACT THAT BILATERAL CONTACTS AND DISCUSSIONS WERE STILL IN PROCESS BETWEEN ATHENS AND ANKARA. IT WOULD BE MOST UNFORTUNATE IF THESE WERE JEOPARDIZED BY OVER-REACTION FROM EITHER SIDE. THE GREEKS RISKED CONTRIBUTING TO TURKISH OVER-REACTION BY TAKING A POSITION ON THE SISMİK'S SAILING THAT TO THE TURKS WOULD BE SEEN AS INSISTING THAT THE AEGEAN IN EFFECT WAS A GREEK LAKE. HABIB
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